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On Learning How to Pray
Their Latest Acquisition
Our Membership

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CONTENTS

PAGE

On Learning How to Pray
Sermon by Harry Emerson Fosdick 183

Prayer . . . . . *by* Harry Emerson Fosdick 189

Their Latest Acquisition . . . . . *by* Grace H. Patton 190

Pioneers in American Music . . *by* Harold Vincent Milligan 192

Our Membership 199

A City Set on a Hill (An Editorial) 200

ILLUSTRATIONS

The Angelus, *by* Millet 182

Riverside Lodge 190

View From Riverside Lodge 191

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"THE ANGELUS," *by* Millet

On Learning How to Pray

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

As far as the records go, only one thing did the disciples explicitly ask Jesus to teach them—how to pray. At first sight it seems strange that they should have asked him this for those disciples had prayed all their lives. When, however, they came under the influence of Jesus and saw what prayer meant to him, it dawned on them that although they had prayed from their youth up they did not know how. "It came to pass," says the Gospel of Luke, "as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples." Evidently they had been observing what prayer meant in his life. He went into it in one mood and came out in another; power was released; praying to him was not a form but a force. And when beside his prayer they put what they called praying, it was plain that, while the same word covered both, the meanings of the two were far apart. So these religiously trained disciples who always had prayed wanted Jesus to teach them how.

Note that this awakened interest in prayer came not at all from new arguments about it but from a new exhibition of its power. Here before their very eyes they saw a personality in whom prayer was vital and influential. The more they lived with him the more they saw that they never could explain him unless they understood his praying and so, not at all because of new arguments but because of those amazing spiritual powers released in him by prayer, they wanted him to tell them how to pray.

It is an impressive experience to face a personality whom we cannot explain until we understand his prayer. A superficial brook can be explained without going far but the river Nile is inexplicable until one knows the high mountains in the center of the continent and the rains that fall there. Personalities like that we do discover, not simply among great figures of history, but in homely places. Here, for example, was a woman who, comparatively young, was left a widow with five children and who resolutely shouldered the practical and spiritual responsibilities which that entailed. By careful management she saw the children through college. On the day of her burial, in her ninety-sixth year, one of the children said they never had seen her impatient or distraught to the point of giving up, even in the most troubled times. One son became president of a great railway system; another became president of a state university; another became a leading pioneer in his department of medical research. That kind of consequence in a family is no accident. That mother was an extraordinary personality. It was the university president who said to me that no one could understand her who did not understand her prayer. It was a force, he said; it released radiance and power.

I think I know all the arguments for and against prayer and I would not minimize them. No one wishes to pray unintelligently. But prayer, as a force

in personalities so powerful that we cannot explain them until we know their praying, goes deeper than argument. Some young man fresh from a college class in philosophy assures me that prayer is nonsense, quite irrational in this modern world. All the while he is talking I keep thinking of some hard-hitting, hard-living man like Henry M. Stanley, coming out of hell in Africa and saying that prayer made him stronger morally and mentally than all his non-praying companions and lifted him hopefully over the wilderness of forest tracks, eager for each day's labors and fatigues. What I want to ask is, what is that force? Never mind about the name! What is that power and how does one get in contact with it and handle it? As the disciple said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray."

This morning let us condense into a brief statement some of the things the great pray-ers of history and the Master, above all, would tell us about how to pray.

For one thing, they surely would say, Pray receptively. That is one of the primary meanings of prayer: "Spirit of God, descend upon my heart." Yesterday, let us suppose, you had a very busy schedule. You put your back tensely and aggressively into the morning's work, and then in the afternoon you went to Carnegie Hall and heard a glorious symphony. You had to change your technique, didn't you? You had been active; you became receptive. You had been aggressive; you became appreciative. You had been doing something to your world; now you let another world do something to you. What a new kind of experience that is; and how indispensable!

The failure of much popular praying arises from the fact that when we pass from our ordinary, aggressive, workaday world into what we call prayer, we do not thus change our technique. Despite our supposition that we are praying, we still are secular. That is, we aggressively are trying to force our selfish will upon the world. To many people prayer is only an additional way of getting what they want, a kind of spare tire to be used when the others fail. They are as much go-getters when they pray as at any other time, and the whole tone of their praying is, "God, get me what I want!"

Indeed, so prevalent is this idea in popular religion that, alas! many ministers still preach it. The angriest letter I have received this year came from a minister who, having correctly understood something I said over the air about prayer, came back with wrathful protest, insisting that, to use his phrase, "prayer moves the arm of God." So! A mortal man dares to desire to move the arm of God! My friends, nothing much more essentially irreverent than that is conceivable. No! True prayer begins only when a human soul desires above all else that the arm of God should move him.

"Prayer is not to ask what we wish of God, but what God wishes of us." Who said that? A modernist? No. A sixteenth-century Christian. "*I would fain be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man.*" Who said that? A contemporary liberal? No. An old German mystic. "Not my will, but thine, be done." Who said that?

All great souls have prayed receptively. "I will hear," said the Psalmist, "what God the Lord will speak." Prayer is the hospitality of the soul entertaining the Most High.

A young man who had recently graduated from a Western university

once sought membership in this church, and when I asked him the effect of his college course on his religious faith he said that on the whole his faith was stronger at the end than at the beginning. When I inquired how he explained that, he said, "Mountains." "Mountains!" I exclaimed. "Yes," he answered, "mountains." And when I inquired what mountains had to do with it, he replied: "A part of every year I spend among the great mountains. I have seen sunrise on too many mountain peaks ever to doubt the reality of God." Have we anything remotely approaching that in our lives, even though we have to experience it amid the canyons of these city streets? Sunrise on mountains!

In the second place, pray affirmatively. The trouble with much popular praying is that it is mainly begging. It conceives the Eternal as a universal organized charity and of ourselves as impecunious applicants, saying, Give me! Clearly, that involves a pagan theory of God, but, worse than that, in actual practice it does so much damage to men's souls that any minister who deals intimately with the secrets of individuals should welcome the chance to sound a warning. One repeatedly hears the familiar complaint: I prayed long and earnestly about this temptation, this habit, this need, and it did no good. Of course it did no good. Habitually behind that complaint one finds the kind of praying which, far from doing good, does harm. Prayer holds the object of solicitation in the center of attention; the more earnest a man's prayer the more stoutly he holds his need in the center of attention. Picture, then, a man praying, as many do, about sickness, for example, holding his sickness in the center of his thought and saying in effect, I am sick, very sick, see how sick I am; give me health! Anybody intelligent about psychological processes knows that the more earnestly a man prays like that the more sick he is likely to be. Run your imagination out, therefore, into other realms of need—sexual passion, discouragement, anxiety. You see, the more we hold such things in the center of attention, even in prayer, the more they will obsess and control our living. In consequence, many people come to see the minister saying, Long and earnestly I prayed about this need and it did no good. And a wise minister says, My friend, when one considers the way you have prayed, you are lucky that it did not ruin you.

One finds no praying like that in the New Testament or in the lofty areas of the Old Testament, or in the great souls of the church at their best. Never! True prayer is affirmative. It turns its back on our wretched, miserable needs and stretches out a taking hand, actually to appropriate the inexhaustible resources of the divine grace. It says,

> The Lord *is* my shepherd; I *shall not* want.
> He *maketh* me to lie down in green pastures;
> He *leadeth* me beside still waters.
> He *restoreth* my soul.

That is affirmative prayer. It says, "I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the

love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." That is prayer.

Everybody knows that at Worms Luther defied the emperor at the risk of his life, but most people do not know what Luther was praying when he did it. But he has told us. "O Thou my God, stand by me, against all the world. . . . Do Thou do it, Thou must do it, Thou alone. It is indeed not my cause, but Thine." That is affirmative prayer. It is like drums and bugles to a man's soul. In sickness it gives tonic thoughts; in anxiety it orients life around sustaining faiths; in discouragement it centers attention on inexhaustible resources. In such praying a man retires for a little while from troubled foregrounds to the great resources in the background and actually appropriates what he needs. Such is affirmative prayer. It does not so much ask as take; it does not so much beg for living water as sink shafts into it and draw from it. It starts as Jesus did: "Our Father who *art*."

In the third place, pray dangerously. To many people the idea that prayer can be dangerous never has occurred. Of all safe things in this world, they think, a comfortable retreat from trouble, an anesthetic even for life's pains, prayer certainly is the safest. That shows how little some people understand prayer. As a matter of historic fact, prayer has been one of the most perilous things great spirits have indulged in.

I have personal friends who prayed and now they are in the heart of Africa, living sacrificial, missionary lives. If they had wanted easy lives, they prayed a few times too often. Once there was a man who could have escaped crucifixion if he had trimmed a little, but instead he went into a garden to pray and, issuing from that experience, he could not trim at all but walked straight to the cross. Behind that man there is another whom one scholar has called "the father of true prayer," Jeremiah, who often desperately wished that he could escape the severe compulsions of his duty, but always that habit of prayer, where the will that was greater than his will laid hold on him again and sent him back. As Jeremiah himself put it, God said to him, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and will show thee great things, and difficult." That is a consequence of praying which the superficial pray-ers never expect but which great spirits know. What a sight it is to watch them retiring into their high backgrounds and then emerging again carrying on their consciences great things and difficult! Every forward step in the moral advancement of the race goes back to some experience like that.

The other evening I sat at home comfortably stretched out in an overstuffed chair, thinking among other things about this sermon, when of a sudden my eyes rested on a book upon the table. It is a beautiful old leather-bound book which once belonged to Hugh Latimer, who was burned at the stake for his faith in the sixteenth century. It still carries his name upon the flyleaf, written with his own hand. As I watched the book, I began in imagination to see Oxford Square that day they led him out to burn him, and across the centuries I heard again the words he spoke to his companion in martyrdom: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as (I trust) shall never be put out." Then I

thought Hugh Latimer turned his eyes on me. Said he:

> So you are going to preach on prayer. What do you know about praying? I am going now from my knees to the stake. Have you any idea what tremendous moral issues prayer, when it is earnest, can present to a man's conscience? You modern preachers have made prayer safe, easy, comfortable, fitted for narcotic purposes. Tell them something about dangerous praying, in which a man's duty becomes to him the compelling will of God which he cannot escape. You there in your overstuffed chair, if you are going to preach about such praying, experience it a little!

So with wide and fascinated eyes I watched the old man as he walked on, going from his knees to his sacrifice.

Of course, I cannot be sure just where this may apply to each of us, but it applies. Lord, teach us to pray dangerously about some moral issue in our lives today!

Once more, pray undiscourageably. As Jesus said, men "ought always to pray, and not to faint." Now, most of our prayer is scaled to a short term. We ask for things immediate. We want what we want when we want it. Even in our praying the spirit of "get rich quick" irreverently enters. That is not great praying. Great praying is always scaled to a long-term enterprise. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth"—prayer like that is handed on from one generation to another.

To be sure, at this point some one is certain to be saying, What good does that do? We want international peace and economic justice and we had better work for them, but praying does not bring them and what use is there pretending that it does? To which I answer, If by prayer you mean saying prayers or expecting God to hand out peace and justice because we request them, of course you are right. We, however, are taking for granted on our part sufficient intelligence to have thrown over long since childish praying which casts on God problems that God never will solve except through us. We have a way of saying, in a sweeping fashion, as though it were a Christian confession of faith, I believe in prayer. Jesus never would have subscribed indiscriminately to that. Some of the most excoriating things he said were about ways of praying he disbelieved in. No more sarcastic picture did he ever draw than the portrait of a man who went up to the temple to pray and, as Jesus said, "stood and prayed thus *with himself*" a narrow, mean, and selfish prayer. There was plenty of praying in which Jesus cordially disbelieved but he did teach his disciples out of the depths of their desire to lift up the great prayer for the kingdom of God on earth. Now, when he did that and when he filled that prayer with the ethical and humanitarian content which he put into it, he *did* something. Believe me, he did!

Put it this way. Beethoven wrote music far beyond the capacity both of the instruments and of the technique available in his day. We read, for example, that the solo of the C minor Concerto was played on "a miserable little box of wires, hardly more sonorous than a spinet." So Beethoven wrote music that could not really be played by the technique or on the instruments of his time, music which, therefore, was in itself a prayer: Give me instruments, create for me instruments so that I can be really played. As you

know, that music itself, by being itself, compelled the creation of new instruments and new technique. As Beethoven's biographer puts it, "Born into a day of small things he helped the day to expand by giving it creations beyond the scope of its available means of expression. So it was literally forced to improve these means and thus to grow with them—a method much used by emancipators of humanity." Indeed, yes! almost always used by emancipators of humanity. For what they do is to give men music—great ideas and ideals of justice and equality, peace and brotherhood—far beyond the implementation of their time, music which is itself a prayer: Give me instruments, create for me in practical social life instruments so that I may be played. That is what the emancipators of humanity have always done.

Suppose that you, devoutly believing in Beethoven, had heard that solo from the C minor Concerto played upon that miserable box of wires. You would have known, would you not? that that could not possibly be the end of the story; that though it might be a long time from Beethoven to Toscanini and the Philharmonic, yet that music would bring to pass at last an orchestra that could play it. So we who deeply believe in Christ and hear his music being murdered by our economic system and our international policies, know that that is not the end of the story. Underline this in your faith: *The future belongs to the music and not to these wretched, obsolete instruments.*

When, therefore, I say to my own conscience and to yours, Believe this and pray and work undiscourageably for this, I am saying something real. If, as Mrs. Browning says, "every *wish* is like a prayer with God," then millions of Americans are not praying for peace and justice. Listen to the prayers that rise from the people. Many of our people are praying,

> Bless me and my wife,
> My son John and his wife,
> Us four, no more. Amen.

Many are praying to get back to the lush days before 1929, despite the poverty that blasted the lives of millions even then. Munitions manufacturers are praying for profits from military and naval armaments to murder millions of boys more, and every heart has its egoistic prayers. My word! what a world of crazy praying!

When you think of it that way, it is no light matter, is it? Consider: Columbus' search for a sea route to the Indies was prayer; Edison's search for the secret of incandescence was prayer; the long accumulating desire for democracy was prayer. Yes, Napoleon's ambition to rule Europe was his prayer, and Pasteur's ambition to glorify France by making a discovery to bless mankind was his prayer. On its deepest levels, human life is a battlefield of conflicting prayers. The strongest forces in this world are these importunate desires, and when a multitude of people share a common desire, when a great prayer rises within millions like the tide called by the sky and filling all the bays and crannies of the human shore, it is irresistible. Prayer, when it is a caricature, is a futile retreat from reality. Prayer, when it is real, can lift the world off its hinges and turn the stream of centuries into new courses. Look to your prayers, then, your deep, real, genuine demands on life. Only when a great multitude that no man can number stands before the throne

(*Continued on page 198*)

Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

Eternal Spirit, Whose truest words to us are spoken in the still, small voice, give Thy servants hearing ears and quiet souls. From the tumult of the world and the stress and strain of a turbulent generation we seek Thy sanctuary, not that we may escape the world, but that we may return to the world with strong spirits and quiet minds.

Speak to us, one by one, in the secret places of the soul, and so calm us that we may hear things that are for the salvation of our lives, the steadying of our characters, the deepening of our faith. Lift us up out of darkness into light, for we walk amid the clouds of earth and lose our way in the twilight and cannot see our goal. We would have light. Light of the world, illumine some spirit here that Thy way may be clear to him as he goes forth today.

Lift us up from care about the trivial to vision of the significant. Canst Thou see how easily our spirits lose themselves amid the underbrush of the world? Lift us up that small things may seem small and great things great. Rearrange our lives. Reorient us. Give us perspective and horizon. Send us out into this great generation, not to fail of greatness in ourselves.

Lift us up from pride to humility and teach us dependableness. May the doors of our minds be no longer barricaded against new truth. Open our eyes to new visions of personal and social possibilities. Enlarge our outlook and keep us humble.

Lift us up from selfishness into magnanimity. Save us from our besetting sins of meanness, self-pity, and egotism. Make us generous. Give us sympathy, magnanimity, and tolerance, we beseech Thee.

As thus we pray for our own souls, it is not for our own souls alone we pray but for those dear and sacred relationships for which in all our noblest hours we sacrificially care. We would lift up into the light of Thy countenance our families. For all the sacred possibilities of home life, blessed be Thy name, O God, Who settest the solitary in families. If any household here has a rift in the lute, so that the music today is spoiled, let some spirit of forgiveness, goodwill, and good sense come to save the day. God be with our children and with all the children who enter the doorways of our schools, and grant that they may be wiser in their generation than we have been and make this a better world than we are putting into their hands.

We lift up into the light of Thy countenance our city and our nation. O God, in days of crisis and alarm, in days also of opportunity and privilege, raise up the spirit of this people into unselfish citizenship. Baptize us with a holy indignation against the betrayal of public trust. Make us hate with a deep and persistent hatred the things that should be hated, and in the spirit of our sires may we love justice, righteousness, and public honesty, so that we may serve them well.

We lift up before Thee our church household. For our sons and daughters who here begin their Christian life we

(*Continued on page 199*)

Their Latest Acquisition

By Grace H. Patton

When the sun-baked "sidewalks of New York" exude heat as does a furnace, and the dust-laden air is thick and smelly and unclean: when the fortress-like buildings shut out whatever breezes might be hovering around Manhattan, and the "sun and the light and the moon and the stars" are darkened with city soot, and the clouds of heat return after the rain; in the day when keepers of apartment houses are grouchy and dwellers in apartment houses are on edge; when the optimists cease because they are few and the pessimists continue because they are many; when the sound of the organ-grinder is anything but low, and they that look out of city windows are smothered with smells; when the ice-cream vender blossoms in the parks and the push-cart hawker is a burden; when desire fails and life seems stale and torrid and unprofitable—then it is that the harassed city woman's thoughts turn to the country, and she wishes that some benign power would transport her from the heat and hurly-burly of the metropolis and deposit her in the sweet and silent coolness of the country.

If she happens to be a business or professional woman whose work in the city makes it impossible for her to take flight whenever the thermometer rises, she counts the days until it shall be time for her vacation, and she casts an envious look after every friend of hers whom she sees departing on train, or bus, or ocean-liner. But, if she finds that the constricted condition of her purse, or the untoward state of things in general, makes it impossible for her, even when she gets a vacation, to depart from the city; or if—as sometimes happens—she is given no real vacation, but only elongated week-ends that are supposed to be a substitute, then does she long even more poignantly for verdant fields and hilltops, and she looks around for some quiet, restful, inexpensive place near to the city where she may escape for a breath of fresh air and a sight of greenery other than that of maculated, man-made city parks.

RIVERSIDE LODGE

So it is with a shout of joy that members of the Business and Professional Women's Club of Riverside Church hear the good news that the Club has

recently taken unto itself a real, honest-to-goodness cabin on Bear Mountain, and that it will be available, summer or winter, to members of the Club at reasonable rates. The recent acquisition has been christened "Riverside Lodge," and it is located a half mile from the well-known "Bear Mountain Inn," about forty-five miles from the city, on the State Park reservation, and it is reachable by bus, by railroad, or by steamer.

No written words, be they ever so graphic, could convey an adequate picture of the Lodge and its surroundings. It must be seen to be appreciated. The characteristic utterance of many, when they view it for the first time, is, "Why, it's so much nicer than I had any idea it was!" Snuggled in among the hills, it commands a splendid view of the Hudson and of the adjacent mountains. From the stone-walled terrace one can watch the river-boats as they go and come, and the whole scene is framed in an ideal setting. There are woods on every hand; there are birds singing in the tree-tops; the place is high enough to get clear, clean air; it is so quiet that one only vaguely hears the sound of traffic in the distance; yet it is so near to "Bear Mountain Inn" and to lovely Hessian Lake and the main road, that one can reach any of these in fifteen or twenty minutes. It combines, in an unusual manner, remoteness and accessibility.

The Lodge itself seems carved out of the landscape. It is a low, airy building constructed of huge native boulders piled upon each other in sloping walls with a deep, overhanging roof. A terrace in front affords a fine place in which to sit and bask in the sunshine or to set a table and eat out under the trees. The surrounding stone parapet is so broad that it may be used for seats. An ambitious member of the Club has already started a rock garden, and who knows but that some industrious garden-lover may some day be supplying the place with flowers and vegetables!

The inside of the Lodge is both home-like and dignified. An enthusiastic visitor to the place exclaimed, "Now, wouldn't you just know that this is the sort of place that would be connected with Riverside Church?" There is nothing cramped or cluttered about the interior. A great, boulder-built fireplace occupies the center of the large living room, and nicely-furnished bedrooms—accommodating six persons, while two may use the divan in the living room—open out of it. The kitchen is a real joy. It has all the

VIEW FROM RIVERSIDE LODGE

(*Continued on page 198*)

Pioneers in American Music

By Harold Vincent Milligan

Organist, The Riverside Church

(*Continued from the July "Church Monthly" –Used by Courtesy of The American Scholar, Phi Beta Kappa Quarterly*)

If the musicians from Europe found the going hard, what of the native Americans who dared to venture upon a musical career with neither education nor the prestige of foreign background to build upon? In the latter half of the eighteenth century several of these courageous souls attempted the impossible.

Among them was William Billings, a tanner of Boston, who is often, though erroneously, referred to as "the first American composer." He has also been called "an American John Bunyan." In 1770, the year the first organ was permitted in a Congregational meeting-house in Providence, he published his first book, *The New England Psalm Singer*, a collection of psalm-tunes and anthems containing several of his own compositions. Billings was a quaint and original character, a tanner by trade, and it is said that some of his first essays in musical composition were chalked down upon pieces of hide. Later he gave up his trade and set up as a music-teacher and dealer but this venture was not successful and he died, as he had lived and many another true-hearted artist before him, in abject poverty. He was rude, uncouth, deformed, blind in one eye, untidy in the extreme, but he was an honest lover of the art of music and his enthusiasm was always at fever-heat. He knew practically nothing about harmony and counterpoint and his music is painfully crude—indeed he had little education of any kind. But it should be remembered that a good composer would have utterly failed at that period of our history. As Louis Elson truly says, Billings broke the ice which was congealing New England music, and America owes him a great debt of gratitude in spite of his thousand errors in harmony and counterpoint. For these abstruse subjects he had the greatest respect and his attempts to write canons and fugues are pathetically earnest. In publishing his second and more ambitious volume of psalm-tunes he speaks of "fuging" as follows:

> It has more than twenty times the power of the old slow tunes, each part straining for mastery and victory, the audience entertained and delighted, agitated and extremely fluctuated, sometimes declaring for one part and sometimes for another. Now the solemn bass demands attention, next the manly tenor, then the lofty counter, now the volatile treble, now here, now there, now here again! O Ecstatic! Rush on, you sons of harmony!

Billings' tunes were immensely popular during his lifetime and for some time afterwards, though none of them have survived to the present day except as historical curiosities.

After Billings, New England produced a long line of similar untrained enthusiasts whose musical productions were almost entirely in the line of hymn-tunes and so-called "anthems."

One of these composers was Oliver Holden, who published and edited five volumes of hymn-tune collections. He was the composer of the tune "Coronation," still sung to the words "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." Holden was a carpenter, a native of Charlestown, Massachusetts, who left his saws and planes to become a teacher of music. By this time there were several music-teachers in Boston, receiving fifty and seventy-five cents per lesson. On account of the scarcity of instruments the teacher generally had to lend his instrument to his pupils for practice. There was also a growing interest in musical things, a merchant in Newport advertising in 1766 "dress good, jewelry, sewing materials, violins, window-glass and short-handled frying-pans."

Another pioneer in native music was Timothy Swan, born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1758, who became a hatter by trade but achieved no little fame as a composer although his naturally diffident nature prevented the success of a public career as a musician. Like his contemporary, William Billings, he was an eccentric. He was "a great reader and a late riser" and his neighbors said of him that he was "poor, proud, and indolent." He lived for twenty-five years in Suffield, Connecticut, and it was there that most of his music was written. During a large part of his long lifetime he was never seen without a hat and it was believed that he wore a hat to bed at night in place of the more conventional nightcap.

In Philadelphia, as in the other colonies, the musician seems to have followed the dancing master. Dancing was taught in a boarding school in Philadelphia in 1728, and in Christ Church there was an organ costing £200. In 1730 the *Pennsylvania Gazette* contained an advertisement stating that Mr. Thomas Ball taught writing, arithmetic, with the true grounds of the French language, at twenty shillings a quarter, while singing, playing on the spinet, and all kinds of needlework were taught by his sister lately arrived from London. There were operas and plays in Philadelphia at this time and we know also that all kinds of musical instruments and music books were on sale at the shop of Michael Hillegas, who was the John Wanamaker of Philadelphia of that time.

The honor of being the first native-born composer belongs not to William Billings of Boston, as was for a long time supposed, but to Francis Hopkinson of Philadelphia. Hopkinson, who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, is probably best known to students of American history as the author of "The Battle of the Kegs" and other satirical poems ridiculing the legend of the invincibility of the British army. He was one of the most versatile men of the Colonial period. By profession a lawyer, he was a member of the Constitutional Convention, first Judge of the Admiralty Court, Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, and otherwise distinguished in the early days of the new nation. Of Hopkinson's early years little is known, but there is every indication that he grew up in an atmosphere of culture and refinement, and since the family was fond of music he probably did not receive the customary warnings against the evils of the frivolous art. At the age of seventeen he commenced the study of the harpsichord and was moved thereby to write an "Ode to Music." He became a proficient performer on the harpsichord and for several years

was one of the leading musical lights of Philadelphia, organizing and giving concerts of chamber music to which the elite of the city subscribed. He studied organ with Joseph Bremmer, an English organist who came to Philadelphia in 1763, and on Bremmer's departure from the city succeeded him as organist of Christ Church. That his knowledge of musical literature was wide and varied may be inferred from his compositions and also from his musical library, a large part of which has been preserved by his descendants, showing that he was familiar with the work of the great masters up to his time. He made a metrical version of the Psalms of David for the Dutch Reformed Church in New York, for which undertaking he received £145, which he used for a trip to England in 1756. His letters home contain numerous references to music and it is recorded, among other things, that he heard a performance of Handel's *Messiah*. In 1771 he wrote to a friend in England, "I wish you would send some poor devil over here to take the church organ and to teach the young misses to play Foote's Minuet and the Regimental March on the spinet. I think a tolerably good master would find encouragement."

After the close of the Revolution Hopkinson does not seem to have taken an active part in musical life, although he continued to act as patron to all the worthy musical endeavors of Philadelphia. It was after the war that he invented his improved method of quilling the harpsichord by means of cork covered with leather, an invention which attracted mech attention and was adopted in Europe. There survives a long correspondence between Hopkinson and Thomas Jefferson in regard to this invention about which Jefferson was very enthusiastic. It did not prove, however, to be as epoch-making as the inventor and his friend hoped, for the harpsichord was doomed to oblivion and inside of a few years had been almost entirely superseded by the piano.

Not only was Hopkinson versatile as a man, being musician, lawyer, judge, author, and inventor, but he was also versatile as a musician, being teacher, organist, harpsichordist, essayist, composer, and music inventor. That he was a man of wide learning is evidenced by the fact that the Hessian officers were so impressed by the character and extent of his library at Germantown that they did all in their power to protect it after it fell into their hands. Among his inventions were an improved form of candlestick and an instrument for measuring distances on the high seas. He also tried his hand at painting, being a pupil of Benjamin West. His portrait, painted by himself, hangs in the rooms of the Pennsylvania Historical Society in Philadelphia. He was a member of the first class ever graduated from the College of Philadelphia, that of 1757. His first public service was as Secretary to a conference between the Governor of Pennsylvania and the Indians in the Lehigh Valley, and from this time on he was constantly in public life in one way or another.

In 1788 Hopkinson published a collection of his own compositions consisting of eight songs, which he dedicated to his friend, George Washington. There is ample evidence that one of these songs, "My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free," the composition which entitles Hopkinson to be ranked as the first native-born American composer, was composed in 1759. It was, however, not his first composition. Two years before this time the students

of the Philadelphia College gave a "Masque of Alfred the Great" in the college hall, for which occasion original music was performed, and it is quite probable that the composer was Hopkinson. Words and music of another ode by Hopkinson were performed at the commencement exercises in 1761 and again in 1762.

Hopkinson's closest rival to the title of "first" is James Lyon, who graduated from Princeton in 1759. At the commencement exercises in that year an ode, set to music by him, was sung, the chorus being,

> We sing great George upon the throne,
> And Amherst, brave in arms.

This ode is one of the earliest American compositions, but unfortunately the music is not extant. It is also probable that Lyon composed music for a drama given at the Princeton commencement in 1762. Lyon became a Presbyterian minister and went to Nova Scotia but he was unable to support himself and his family in that remote and thinly-settled district and in 1772 he moved to Machias, Maine, where he preached the gospel until his death in 1794. In 1762, eight years before the publication of Billings' *New England Psalmsinger;* he published a collection of psalm-tunes called *Urania,* the first book to contain original musical compositions. A new edition in 1767 indicates that it was a success, while still another edition was published in New York in 1773. An indication of the discouraging conditions confronting the composer of the day is to be found in the fact that the first edition amounted to 199 copies in all. There are seventy tunes and twenty-six so-called "anthems" in the volume, none of them bearing the composer's name. The tunes are in plain choral style, while some of the anthems contain an attempt at "fuguing." Just how many tunes are by James Lyon is uncertain—probably six, including three of the "anthems." In commenting on this work, Oscar Sonneck, the leader in research into musical conditions of this period, says:

> Lyon had no great originality, but he had an inborn talent, for nobody will attempt to compose in a musical wilderness, no matter how valueless the resulting musical composition may be, unless he is forced to do so by latent creative genius. What might men like Lyon and Hopkinson have done if educated in France, Germany, or England? It is not the absolute but the relative value of their music that demands attention. Their glory is that of the musical pioneer.

Another of these shadowy and far-away musical lights is that of John Anthes, born in 1740 in Fredericktrop, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, where the Moravians had a preaching station. Although he was apprenticed to a wheelwright in Bethlehem he devoted most of his time to the study of music and learned to play on all the stringed instruments. The musical library at Bethlehem is said to contain fourteen of his compositions. Anthes was sent as a missionary to Egypt where he fell into the hands of the Turks, who punished him for his religious activities with the bastinado, from the effects of which he never fully recovered. While lying ill in that distant country he amused himself by composing string-quartets. When convalescent he returned to Europe and in Vienna met Haydn, who with other musicians is said to have performed some of his compositions.

Another native composer was Peter Albrecht von Hagen, born in 1781, probably in Charleston, South Carolina, where his father was organist. The von Hagens, like the Bachs, were a musical family, producing composers and performers in each generation. The von Hagens later moved to New York and in 1789 the name of P. A. von Hagen, Jr. appears on a concert program as a pianist, he being at that time eight years old. In 1796 the family moved to Boston, where he continued his career as virtuoso and teacher. In 1797 Peter Albrecht opened a "Musical Magazine and Warranted Pianoforte Warehouse" at 62 Newbury Street, and two years later he embarked on a supplementary career as music publisher. It is presumable that he received his musical education from his father, probably a superior one for the day and place, for Peter Albrecht's compositions are distinctly above the average.

Hopkinson and von Hagen produced music more nearly comparable in quality to that of their European contemporaries than any other of the early American composers. They were not so closely under the influence of Puritan hymnody and their best work is found in a number of secular songs for solo voice, some of which require little editing for present-day use.

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed an extraordinary expansion and development of materialistic civilization and the beginnings of cultural life, but the energies of the young nation were still consumed by the demands of practical affairs, and the arts lagged far behind. Our pioneer forebears were concerned with the founding and maintenance of schools and colleges in each new community and they were in most cases not unmindful of the esthetic side of life, but this still remained pretty largely *terra incognita* to them. The musical culture of Europe was something of which they had heard and which they regarded with a wistful combination of admiration and contempt, but the real business of life to them consisted of farming, manufacturing, and trading. Certain other pursuits requiring more or less cultivation of the mind, such as law (and its corollary "Politics"), medicine, and the sciences, contributing as they do toward material prosperity and well-being, were also held in esteem. Any adult male human being who could not or would not make himself of value to the community in any of these occupations was worse than useless. Music, water-color painting, and embroidery were pleasing accomplishments for young ladies whose social position warranted their indulgence in such unproductive pastimes.

But musical talent continued to get itself born here and there and the result was sometimes ludicrous and always pathetic. When we examine the music of these "prehistoric" composers we cannot but smile at their pompous emptiness. Hardly a page of their printed works is worthy the paper and ink and yet there is something heroic in their failures. Musical education was still in the most primitive stage and it is not until after the Civil War that we find young musicians turning to Europe for training.

The native musicians during the first half of the century doubtless faced conditions somewhat less antagonistic than their forerunners in colonial days but they were still far from the promised land. The leading light among these American pioneers was undoubtedly Lowell Mason (1792-1872), who

was fortunate in that his natural bent toward hymnody and choral music of a simple character did not run counter to the taste of his day. He achieved a degree of fame and fortune far beyond that of any other American musician up to his own time, and many of his hymns are still sung. Not to be overlooked even in a hasty summary of the period is William Henry Fry (1813-1864), who wrote the first native grand opera to be publicly performed, the historic *Leonora,* which was produced in Philadelphia in 1845. Ten years later the second native opera was brought out in New York, this time with an American subject, George F. Bristow's *Rip van Winkle,* an operatic version of Irving's tale. Bristow also manufactured some symphonic works which were performed by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. These men and others have their place in history, but the most interesting and in many ways the most significant figure of the period is Stephen Foster, whose simple folksongs have achieved a measure of "immortality" which places their composer's name at the very top of the list of native music-makers.

The story of Stephen Foster's life is well known and his career is a good example of what happens when a musical talent is placed in an unmusical environment. His story is not the oft-told tale of a struggle between genius and poverty, for the Foster family was a prominent one in its time and place, but it is rather that of a talent which, because of lack of incentive, never came to fruition. Born in the pioneer town of Pittsburgh on July 4, 1826, Stephen evinced as a child what his father referred to as "a strange talent for Musick," and strange it remained to his uncomprehending family until the bitter end. Without musical training or experience he stumbled almost by chance upon popular approval for his simple songs. The public which sang and applauded his first negro minstrel ditties encouraged him to embark upon song-writing as a career and for a number of years he continued to turn out popular songs by the dozen, with now and then a real gem—such as "My Old Kentucky Home," "The Old Folks At Home," "Old Black Joe," and "Nelly Was a Lady"—among the baubles. The amount of musical culture to be found in Pittsburgh during the formative years of Stephen's boyhood was negligible. Pianos and other musical instruments were extremely rare west of the Allegheny Mountains in the 1830's and it is doubtful that he heard much music of any kind during these early years. There is no evidence that he ever attempted to overcome the deficiencies of his early musical education. On the contrary he was either content with his achievements or, feeling that the struggle was hopeless, lacked the courage to begin it. At the end of his life, in 1864, he was, as a composer, just about where he had been at the beginning of his career. As far as his original inspiration took him he could go, but no farther. He could not develop a melody or vary his harmony and any species of counterpoint was Greek to him. And yet when his inspiration is of so pure and exalted a nature as it is in "My Old Kentucky Home" or "The Old Folks At Home" the very limitations of his power become virtues, resulting in a simplicity and directness of utterance which no amount of erudition and sophistication could have equalled.

It would be futile to compare him with any of the great men of music. The

circumstances of his life, the environments of his mind, were so totally different from those surrounding any of the acknowledged masters that speculation of this kind is futile. He bears some slight resemblance to Schubert. Who can say what the sum total of Franz Schubert's achievements might have been if he had been born in Pittsburgh in 1826?

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SERMON

(*Continued from page 188*)

and with a voice like many waters cries, We are through with war and poverty; we demand peace and justice and brotherhood—only then will men invent the instruments on which such music can be played.

If some one says, This deep, interior attitude which you have been describing as prayer is certainly very different from merely saying prayers; it is rather the habitual and constant highlands and backgrounds of great living, I answer, Of course it is. What do we suppose the New Testament means when it says, "Pray without ceasing"? You cannot imagine a busy man like Paul saying prayers without ceasing. To be sure, all the year ought to be more unselfish because of Christmas day, every month more grateful because Thanksgiving comes, every day more triumphant because of Easter, all our married life the sweeter because we remember the anniversaries. There is value in special times and places. Prayers can help prayer, but prayer itself is spiritual life at its creative origin.

If some one says, Much that you have been talking of I know in my own experience but I never have called it prayer, I answer, Of course you know it. There is no possibility of high, strong life without it, and it is prayer. I beg of you, do not be so misled by the pettiness and ignorance of popular religion as to miss the fact that not only now but in all the centuries, in the great seers and saints, this has been prayer. Do not let it remain unconscious and unrecognized in you. Lift it up; make it radiant and powerful. Make your life one that people cannot fully understand unless they understand your prayer.

PRAYER

Eternal Spirit, who is sufficient to speak about the interior communion of an eternal soul with the eternal God? Forgive the inadequacy of our speech and help us every one to make it good in the deeper adequacy of our praying. Amen.

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon on March 11, 1934.

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THEIR LATEST ACQUISITION

(*Continued from page 191*)

things really necessary for cooking, and its most cherished equipment is a dear little electric range, on which one domestic devotee has already baked a strawberry shortcake! There is a furnace in the basement; and when any group comes out in the winter, all they need to do is to notify the management and there will be a good steam-heated house to greet them. Beneath the house is a roomy, two-car garage.

Because Riverside Lodge is located in a State-controlled Park, there are no undesirable neighbors. The Park offers special privileges to occupants of the Lodge in the line of sports. Golf, tennis, swimming, hiking and winter sports are some of the diversions with

which the guests may occupy their time. Then there is the ever-present pastime of loafing.

It is no wonder that the "B. and P.'s" are ardent in their attitude toward this newly-acquired possession of theirs. One can see a bright future in store for it and one can picture many weary business and professional women making their way out there in summer or winter, sitting out on the terrace or around the fireplace, reading, resting, enjoying each other's company and gaining, from their respite from daily duties, strength and refreshment to return to their tasks in the demanding city. And we venture to predict that, in the years to come, those who journey forth from its portals at daylight or gather round its fireplace at twilight will have reason to invoke manifold blessings on this spot.

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Our Membership

AGAIN we are taking a look back over the past year to think in terms of numbers in connection with our membership. This will be our third review of this nature. The Latchstring article in 1932 on this subject was headed "1977" to indicate our total membership; in 1933 it was "2154"; and now we report 2344. The number of new members received during this past year, however, was 257, though the net gain was but 190. This difference is due to the transfer of persons by letter to other churches, the necessity of dropping several members because of continued lack of knowledge concerning them, and the death of others.

In studying over the list of those who have been transferred to other churches we find that one person has gone to another church in the city, 6 to neighboring towns in the suburbs, 5 to New Jersey, and the others to California, Texas, Pennsylvania, upstate New York, Tennessee, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine, New Mexico and Canada.

Since we published the list last September, the following members have died. We miss them sorely. Their passing reminds us anew of the large place they had in our company and lends a new quality of reverence toward the loved ones whom they have left.

Howard B. Kirkland — Chester T. Hartlett
Alexander H. Candlish — John Bauer
Mrs. Mary C. Graub — Miss Caroline H. Norton
Mrs. Francis W. Breed — William Drew Goodwin
C. Murray Rice — Mrs. Mary Santry
Miss Caroline McKenzie

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PRAYER

(*Continued from page 189*)

pray. Upon those who instruct them in the ideals of Jesus may the spirit of Jesus rest. On families where the angel of death has come may Thy blessing come in comfort, stability, and inward peace. Guard their hearts and thoughts in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and make death to be swallowed up in victory. And upon the strength of this church lay Thy hand that all the world may feel its dedication to those things which make for peace, righteousness, and brotherhood.

We ask in the spirit of Christ. Amen.

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A CITY SET ON A HILL

It was hoped and expected when The Riverside Church was planned and built that it would be a center of spiritual life reaching far beyond the community in which it ministers most directly. The continued evidence that it is so, more impressive during the summer in some ways, inspires awe, rejoicing, and a sense of responsibility.

The building itself is a symbol. Over and over one catches bits of conversation and discussion as to what it stands for, what it means to see the tower rise before one and to hear the music of its bells. The preacher is a symbol, also much discussed, around which the hopes not only of individuals but of churches center. Mere membership or attendance makes one somehow a symbol of privilege and obligation.

All who are associated in any way with the church face endless questioning with regard to religious faith, ethical convictions, and effective methods of doing church work. The ministers are invited to appear before informal forums arranged by groups associated with the Summer Session, primarily to answer questions.

Most amazing is the unnoticed procession of men and women, usually not members and often not Protestants, who come in with their baffling personal problems and sometimes in desperate spiritual and physical need. They make one hear the words of Jesus:

> "Ye are the salt of the earth,
> Ye are the light of the world.
> A city set on a hill cannot be hid.
> Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel.
> Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

C. I. H.

Handbook of the Institution and Its Building

This book deals with the institution and its program, the building, its architecture and symbolism, the details of the stained glass windows and of the carved stone being identified. It is a book of 127 pages, including 59 reproductions of photographs of the structure. In make-up and typography the book is one which you will wish to have in your possession and keep as a souvenir of the church. It is for sale at the Literature Table on Sunday mornings and in the vestibule throughout the week.

It usually sells for $1.00 a copy but the Trustees have authorized us to sell 1,000 at 50c a copy plus fifteen cents if you ask to have it mailed.